



CUYAHOGA COUNTY BOARD OF ELECTIONS

Jeff Hastings
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Inajo Davis Chappell
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Eben O. (Sandy) McNair, IV
Member

Deborah Sutherland
Member

Jane M. Platten
Director

Pat McDonald
Deputy Director

November 20, 2012

Ms. Inajo Davis Chappell
Mr. Jeff Hastings
Mr. Sandy McNair
Mayor Debbie Sutherland
2925 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Dear Board Members Chappell, Hastings, McNair & Sutherland,

I respectfully submit this letter as notice of my resignation as Director of the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections, effective Friday, December 14, 2012.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve the voters of this community in such an important capacity, beginning at such a critical period of much needed change and improvement in the overall election system in this county. With your guidance and support and with a very dedicated and talented team of managers and employees, we moved this agency into the leadership role for election administration and best practice environment I knew we could become.

In December 2007, a mere 70 days away from a Presidential Primary election, we reversed course and started the reformation of the entire election system in Cuyahoga County that I believe highlights our most important accomplishments. Migrating to a paper based optical scan voting system for the voters of Cuyahoga County was, in my opinion, the absolute right decision. And, although it was at a critical and difficult time, it was the right time. I believe this county is far better served today where we offer a paper ballot system that provides scalability and stability with an election verification safety net.

Along with the new voting system, came a comprehensive agency overhaul of all operations and election administration procedures. Written procedure manuals, documented benchmarking systems and data informed decisions that were absent in this agency prior to 2007, now drive our work every day. We streamlined operations and developed best practices that are inclusive and detailed and conform to today's voting dynamics. We right sized the staffing structure; developed performance based standards and created a strong, diverse workforce.

Elections in Cuyahoga County are today conducted with a task by task "calendar" of over 500 items covering every detail needed to achieve a successful election. Our management team and employees are held accountable to completing each task and are accountable to each other due to the blended nature of process dependency.

Together, with community input, we downsized Cuyahoga County's precinct structure by almost 30% and saved approximately \$800,000 as a result. At the same time, we increased participation in our vote by mail program of up to 70% in special elections and 40+% in large general elections, offering voters alternatives to facing long lines and casting a ballot on election day. In 2006, at the beginning of no fault absentee in Ohio, 20% of Cuyahoga County's voters voted by mail. In 2012, 42%, approximately 265,000, voters voted early. These important initiatives balanced our voting population within 35 days of voting as opposed to one day of voting thus allowing for a more manageable and smoother election day.

Few stones were left unturned in our effort to reform the Board of Elections. Today, we have a strong poll worker training program, a comprehensive provisional ballot verification process, a robust in house voting process which allows up to 500 voters an hour to cast their ballots, and transparent, secure and bipartisan procedures commencing from ballot creation through ballot tabulation.

Receiving a grant for \$50,000 from the United States Elections Commission to develop best practice procedures and a virtual "how to guide" to conducting pre and post election system testing and post election auditing is the most recent example of how far we have come as a leader in election administration. I am particularly proud of our staff for the work we have done and the commitment made to ensuring accuracy and transparency in every election we conduct.

We have also turned the agency around in terms of offering a high standard of customer service to the voters, candidates and the overall community. Our goal to offer as much online information as possible has brought us into a new realm of communication and efficiency with our constituencies. We've worked to develop an open and enhanced community engagement program and I believe that is evident in all of our interactions with the public and media.

Your consistent and strong support has been critical in the agency's transformation into one that offers transparent, accurate, and quality elections and voter and community focused service delivery. For that and for the opportunity to serve the community as Elections Director, I am grateful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jane M. Platten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Jane M. Platten
Director
Cuyahoga County Board of Elections

Cc: Pat McDonald, Deputy Director